<u>Report submitted to</u>

United States Agency for International Development

(USAID)

and the

Public Affairs Section,

American Embassy

1. Introduction

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Public Affairs Section of the American Embassy organized and facilitated a study tour to the United States, from 3-18 March 2001, for a delegation of six civil society organization (CSO) stakeholders, comprising both Government and CSO representatives, to look at strategic CSO/government partnerships.

The main purpose of this visit was to increase knowledge of the three main elements of USAID's new civil society strengthening program in South Africa, namely:

Improving CSO-Government capacity for partnering;
Increasing access to better information;
Enhancing enabling environment for partnerships.

Participants were selected to represent the following types of entities:

Regional NGO coalition;
Information technology (IT) organization;
Network of rural community-based organizations
Organizational development training NGO
Department of Welfare
National Development Agency (NDA)

The 6-member delegation consisted of the following people:

Dr Thoahlane Thoahlane, Chief Executive Officer, National Development Agency (NDA)
Gail Smith, Director, Public-Private Partnerships, Department of Social Development (NGO Directorate)
Signet Mashego, Executive Director, Rural Development Services Network (RDSN)
Sarah Hugow, Director, Eastern Cape NGO Coalition
David Barnard, Executive Director, Southern African NGO Network (SANGONeT)
Reuben Mogano, Executive Director, SEDIBENG

Since their return to South Africa, Dr Thoahlane and Signet Moshego have resigned and taken up new positions.

This report presents an overview of participants' experiences in participating in the study tour, including lessons learned and their relevance to the South African situation.

2. Promoting Partnerships for Policy Formulation and Effective Service Delivery

(This section was prepared by Reuben Mogano and provides a brief overview of the changing dynamics around partnerships for policy formulation and effective service delivery in South Africa).

The post-1994 socio-economic and political dispensation presents a critical set of challenges and opportunities for key actors involved in the delivery of social services. A fundamental feature of this post-apartheid landscape has been a need to redefine socio-economic priorities and identify innovative and creative vehicles for social delivery. The early lesson in the delivery effort has been the recognition that a collaborative, integrated and coherent approach is central to the success of any development initiative. Underlying this "recognition" has been a shift towards a conscious creation of "partnerships" as one of the key implementation vehicles. Partnerships or "intersectoral collaborations" are therefore "seen as offering creative solutions to economic development, the eradication of poverty and the development of sustainable agriculture".

The conceptual definition of partnerships will vary according to the context and scope of application. For the sake of consistency and convenience in this report, I will use the Institute for Development Research's definition which refers to partnership as "groups getting together to negotiate their roles and benefits which accrue from such collaboration". A key component of a partnership is therefore to identify and implement strategies to address a focal issue through inter-sectoral resource sharing.

Some interesting models of partnerships have evolved in the past few years at local, provincial and national levels. I am not aware of any comprehensive survey of established partnerships apart from the study that has been referred to in this report. However, the ones that have been identified provide important pointers and lessons for partnerships that may emerge in the future.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry with the Mvula Trust, the Department of Public Works with a variety of CBOs and Sanlam and ECSEC are a few celebrated examples of inter-sectoral collaboration that have yielded some benefits for the respective partners. It is crucial to point out that partnerships that involved state departments and CSOs place greater emphasis on the notion of complementarity as opposed to purely contract-based relationships. The state departments assert that they are committed to such partnerships, having realized their delivery potential, and that they had delivery capacity constraints, both human and financial.

On the other hand, civil society organizations emphasize their closeness to communities, their tradition of ensuring popular participation in delivery initiatives, cost-effectiveness and flexible delivery approaches.

Chris Mullins, an organizational development specialist attached to Emthunzini, an NGO in Cape Town, has some interesting lessons to share emanating from a sample of partnerships he worked with. He highlights the following trends:

Partnerships do not just happen. They need lots of negotiating, strategic visioning, consultation and time to grow. They are threatened by premature formation.
The maintenance function between partner organizations is essential to cope with differences in culture, values, time frame, size, etc.
Power-sharing and decision-making mechanisms must be explicit and transparent.
Partnerships call for more complex mechanisms of decision-making.
There is a need to move out of the paradigm of "hierarchies".

Overall, parties entering any partnership arrangement need to be pre-occupied with the following questions during the conceptual stages, and subsequently the entire life of the relationship:

Where does the real "intent" of the partnership lie?
What is the "form" that the partnership takes?
Where is the "power /control" and how is it exercised?
How is the partnership "maintained" and how is "accountability" exercised?

Intent around partnerships:

Are partners (or some of) being pushed into the partnership, or do the partners themselves drive the notion? In other words, is this partnership an expression of marriage of convenience/survival or is it based on free will?
Is the partnership going to do something "now" or will partners carry on with "business as usual"?
Are partners able to develop and commit to a common vision e.g. form, structure, etc.
Is the partnership designed to benefit all partners or are there winners and losers?

Form:

What form does the partnership take and what are the implications for the identity, role and power of partners?

Power / Control:

How do partners address issues of difference of size, for instance, does size equal power and control?
Do the funding partners have more power, say control over decision-making?
Who is perceived to have the most power / control over decision-making?
What mechanisms are in place to monitor and check power (unilateral actions / decisions, etc)?
Is it clear what decisions are made where and by whom (roles, functions, partnership organizations, etc)?

Maintenance / Accountability:

What does the partnership do to maintain healthy communication and relationship, both between participants and partner structures?
How do partners exercise accountability back to their own constituencies / structures?

From the above observations, it would seem that effective partnerships would have some of the following characteristics:

Clear strategies of engagement;
Clear and common agreed vision;
Better organization and structural development;
Clear policies and procedures;
Agreed lines of accountability;
Better and appropriate management skills;
Legitimacy of parties;
Simplified bureaucratic procedures;
Greater intra-party communication.

Lessons Learned

The two-week study tour to the United States was a great learning experience for all participants. The carefully selected itinerary of meetings and events exposed participants to valuable insights into the U.S. civil society sector - its diversity and size, how it works, what it is concerned with and how it practically tackles social and political problems in the American context - and its relationship with Government and other sectors of society.

In this regard the organizers need to be complimented for organising the above-mentioned itinerary, especially in view of the diversity of the group of participants and their individual areas of personal and professional interest. The itinerary allowed participants the opportunity to network with various institutions and organizations across the social spectrum (government, academic, SOS, coalitions, networks, foundations and local government), exposing them to ideas and approaches around partnerships and the U.S. civil society sector in general that could be adapted and applied in the South African context. Significant among these are multidisciplinary, integrated approaches, the balance between advocacy and development, the importance of economic and financial aspects (often neglected in local approaches), and the impact of information technology (the 'digital divide').

One of the most important lessons learned was the wealth of creativity and experience about development implementation evident in American civil society organizations.

Many U.S. non-profit organizations are professionally managed and administered with long histories and track records that make them more acceptable and attractive to government at various levels, as well as funders and other stakeholders. Enabling legislation also plays a key role in providing an environment conducive to non-profit activity (e.g. tax benefits).

The participants were also very impressed by the way that civil society advocates in the United States make full use of the democratic and legislative instruments available to them, such as lobbying their congressional representatives, inviting influential political and business leaders to participate in open debating forums with NGOs and developing 'toolkits' for advocacy on a particular piece of legislation – primers that define issues, and give updates on the latest legislative developments (know your rights, and what to do if your rights are violated), etc.

Another eye-opener was the facilitative role that government plays when working with NGOs, a role that includes providing high quality public information, whether it is the detailed statistical reports of the US Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service or the "Funding Alerts" issued by the DC Mayor's office. This is a challenge for the South African government at all levels – the ability to provide citizens with reliable, useful and accessible statistical and information services is an important element of democracy building.

In general, the wealth of information available to American CSOs is astounding – in its quality, range and level of detail. In this regard institutions such as the Foundation Center (funding information), Institute for Policy Studies at Johns Hopkins University "Comparative Non-profit Sector Project (qualitative and quantitative date on the U.S. and international non-profit sectors) and the activities of membership/representative bodies such as the NCRC, Independent Sector, InterAction and the Washington Council of Agencies, provide the American CSOs with a strategic support base and comparative advantage in relation to their counterparts in developing countries such as South Africa.

Through the meeting with Technology Works for Good and participation in the Independent Sector Spring Research Forum, participants were also exposed to the crucial role that information and communication technology (ICT) plays in ensuring that this information is easily accessible to the people who need it. There is much debate about 'bridging the digital divide', and access to information through technology as a form of equity and empowerment. But the debate is not just about finding and generating information – it is also about the possibilities opening up for interactive communication and sharing of information for advocacy purposes – this is where the ability to access and use technology effectively becomes a strategic issue for NGOs.

4. Recommendations

The recommendations of participants focus on two areas, namely logistical arrangements and how best the lessons learned during the tour could be applied in the South African context.

Logistical arrangements

Timing of visit – early March is still fairly cold in the United States and Spring/Summer might be a better time to organize a visit of this nature.
Hotel accommodation – the hotel in Washington is not adequate, especially when residing for longer periods.
Meetings – participants would have preferred more time with some organizations and/or not to have attended all meetings.
None of these recommendations should be seen as criticism, as everyone in the delegation understands the challenges and limitations to address the expectations of both USAID/US Embassy and participants.

Application of lessons learned

USAID should undertake a pilot study on public-private partnerships by involving local government and NGOs from conceptualization to implementation.
More resources should be mobilized to strengthen the professional capacity of NGOs.
A dialogue on the relationship between NGOs/civil society should be encouraged with government bodies.
The business community should be educated and encouraged to become involved in local development initiatives.
Lessons learnt during the visit should be considered as part of the strengthening of the civil society program and, were possible, be incorporated in this regard.
Government and NGOs should be encouraged to work together.

Organizational building and training of NGOs should be given priority by organizations such as USAID.

In addition to these points, Sedibeng Centre envisages playing a pivotal role in strengthening emerging and established partnerships in South Africa. It is convinced that mutually beneficial relationships are a necessary vehicle for effective service delivery. Sedibeng Centre's role will be to optimize opportunities and space for critical reflection on areas such as strategic visioning and planning, organization design / structure, role clarification, accountability and communication mechanisms, financial and change management, designing effective conflict resolution and decision-making mechanisms.

USAID might therefore want to pilot a two-year public-private partnership project focusing on service delivery in two or three provinces of South Africa, with the preferred focus on the Eastern Cape, Northern Province and Gauteng. The economic, social and political make-up of these provinces will undoubtedly shape the nature and content of these partnerships. If the project has "model building" as a secondary objective, the sample profile will provide instructive pointers.

USIAD might also want to focus on a number of key themes for public-private partnerships, namely poverty eradication, appropriate use of technology in a “Global Village” and the promotion of SMMEs.

The issue of access to credit is likely to emerge in the coming few months as one of the available options for poor communities to achieve economic justice. It might be strategic for USAID to explore this idea further without being perceived as hijacking the current initiatives spearheaded by COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP). It might well be that a program could be conceptualized focusing on "Economic and Financial Literacy" as a life management strategy within South African high schools.

USAID should capitalize on the knowledge and experience of the study-tour team in refining their public-private partnership programs.

It is in the interests of USAID in particular, and civil society in general, to reconsider support for partner organizations involved in public-private partnerships. If sustainability of these public-private partnerships is a key consideration, the institutional well-being of partner organizations, particularly NGOs, should be prioritized.

Proposal for the future

During the study tour the participants representing NGOs (Signet Mashego, Reuben Mogano, Sarah Hugow and David Barnard) informally discussed the possibility of developing a joint proposal in support of targeted interventions to strengthen the NGO sector in certain provinces.

The idea is to bring together the core skills of the respective organizations (e.g. organizational development, ICT training, etc.) and to develop complementary strategies in order to maximize and enhance individual efforts.

The objective is to present this proposal to USAID for consideration as part of its civil society strengthening program in South Africa. At the same time, this initiative will also present the participants with an opportunity to work together and implement the lessons learned during the visit.

To date, the participants have not finalized this proposal and they will continue to interact in this regard during the next few months.

Conclusion

The study tour visit to the United States was a rich and rewarding experience for all participants. Many lessons have been learned and contacts established, while the visit also allowed participants to reflect on their work in South Africa and how best it could benefit from this experience.

The group of participants would therefore like to thank USAID and the American Embassy for the opportunity to participate in the study tour. In this regard they would like to express their appreciation to a number of people for their special contributions in ensuring the success of the tour.

The role of Jaime Kuklinski deserves special mention. As the “tour guide” Jaime went out of his way to make every aspect of the tour comfortable and enjoyable for everyone. His local knowledge and expertise was a major advantage to all concerned and the experiment to involve a USAID employee, based in South Africa, in a tour of this nature was therefore a big success.

The group would also like to acknowledge the role of Mauricette Hursh-Cesar of the Forum for Intercultural Communication. She complemented the role performed by Jaime and participants enjoyed her company and interest in South Africa.

Lastly, the group would like to thank the staff of USAID and the American Embassy, especially M aureen Howard and Melvin Mosehla, for all their efforts in support of the planning and logistical arrangements of the tour.

ANNEXURE 1

Meeting Schedule

3/3: Departure from South Africa

4/3: Arrival in Washington, DC (via Atlanta)

4/3: National Community Investment Coalition (NCRC) Annual Convention – Chairman’s Reception

5/3: National Community Investment Coalition (NCRC) Annual Convention

6/3: National Community Investment Coalition (NCRC) Annual Convention

Visit to Capitol Hill

7/3: United States Department of Agriculture

8/3: Johns Hopkins University - Third Sector Project (Baltimore)

Enterprise Foundation (Columbia, Maryland)

New York

9/3: Rockefeller Brothers Fund

NY Borough Commissioners

Foundation Center

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

10/3: Sightseeing in New York

11/3: Sightseeing in New York / return to Washington, DC

Washington, DC

12/3: Washington Council of Agencies

Private Agencies Collaborating Together

Foundation Center

Technology Works for Good

13/3: United Way, Old Town Alexandria

NTI - Old Town

World Bank

14/3: Mayor’s Office - Introduce Bridges to Friendship - a collaborative partnership between Department of Justice/DC Government/Navy/Covenant House to create employment in low-income neighborhoods.

Admiral Weaver, Commandant, Naval District of the District of Columbia Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, Old Executive Office Building, White House

Farewell function organized by Jaime Kuklinski

15/3: Independent Sector Spring Research Forum

16/3: Independent Sector Spring Research Forum

17/3: Departure to South Africa (via Atlanta)

18/3: Arrival in South Africa

20/4: Debriefing session at USAID in Pretoria

ANNEXURE 2

Assessment of Meetings/Events

5 - Very interesting and useful
4 - Interesting and useful
3 - Fairly interesting and useful
2 - Interesting, but not particularly useful
1 - Not useful at all

	Meeting/Event	SARAH	GAIL	REUBEN	SIGNET	DAVID
	NCRC Annual Convention	5	5	5		4
	USDA (Rural Cooperative Services and Rural Business-Cooperative Services)	3	3	3		2
	InterAction	4	5	4		4
	John Hopkins (Institute for Policy Studies)	4	5	4		4
	Enterprise Foundation	5	3	4		3
	Rockefeller Brothers Fund	1	3	4		3
	NY Borough Commissioners	2	3	3		N/A
	Foundation Center	4	3	4		4
	UNDP	2	3	3		3
	Washington Council of Agencies	5	5	3		4
	PACT	N/A	3	4		N.A.
	Technology Works for Good	5	4	5		5
	United Way	2	5	4		3
	NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science	4		5		3
	World Bank	1	4	2		2
	Mayors Office	2		3		2
	Navy Yard	3		3		2
	Covenant House	2		3		3
	Office of Faith-Based Initiatives and Community Development	2		3		3
	Independent Sector Spring Research Forum	3	4	4		5
	TOTAL (MAX 100)	59	58	73		59

ANNEXURE 3

Overview of Individual Meetings

As part of the debriefing meeting held at USAID in Pretoria on 20 April 2001, participants were requested to prepare short reports on selected meetings.

The contents of these meeting reports have not been changed or adjusted, and therefore reflect the specific views and comments of participants, including lessons learned.

Gail Smith

InterAction

Interaction is a networking structure for US based non-governmental organization engaged in development and humanitarian efforts around the world. The mission of this organization is to enhance the effectiveness and professional capacities of its members. In order to be eligible for membership, an organization must meet the Interactive PVO Standards in areas such as governance, financial management and program performance. These organizations must also have international programs aimed at development, environment, human rights, micro-enterprise, disaster response health, education, etc.

What I found instructive was the PVO Standards. In response to a need for improved public confidence in the integrity, quality and effectiveness of member organizations, financial, operational and ethical codes of conduct were defined and adopted by members. Of particular significance is the fact that it is based on a process of self-certification. The CEO and/ Board Chairperson of the organization certify that his/her agency is in compliance with the agreed standards, or where it is not in compliance, to indicate what steps they have committed to take to attain compliance. The self-certification process continues to involve active dialogue between elected Standards Committee and the members and guidelines for interpretation is available.

During 1993/4 an in-depth study into an enabling legal environment for the NPO sector in South Africa was undertaken and recommendations from this study largely informed the NPO Act approved by Cabinet in 1997. The approach adopted in the Act was self-regulation with government playing a supportive instead of the notorious policing and oppressive pre-1994 role. To date the sector, having boldly chosen self-regulation instead of state control and regulation, have as yet to come up with strategies to respond to the challenge. Sangoco developed a code of conduct but the impact of this on organizations and the level of trust of the public in the sector still has to be evaluated. The Interaction PVO Standards does provide an interesting model. For this model to work, though, would require amongst other things a certain level of sector and organizational “wellness”. For example, if the support (e.g. Financial, active participation on Boards) is not adequate, there is less incentive for organizations to meaningfully commit to improved functioning and performance. An organization that is struggling to survive has less resources (or motivation) to allocate to excellence. The impact of codes will be limited if the environment is not supportive/ enabling.

The NPO Act provides for the development of codes of conduct by the NPO Directorate. The Directorate has developed codes of good practice for organizations, fund-raisers and donors that will be published within the next few months. The Interactive model has highlighted the fact that codes in itself will achieve very little impact if other conditions and initiatives are not in place.

Technology Works for Good

Technology Works for Good (TW4G) launched in November 2000, has as its mission to help non-profit organizations to transform the way they think about and use technology to deliver their services more effectively. It acknowledges that there are many disconnected capable individuals and firms already working in isolation to solve parts of the technology needs. TW4G seeks to be an enabling organization to co-ordinate these disconnected and isolated problem-solvers.

Through a needs assessment, TW4G have found that it is also not simply a lack of funding that is at the root of inability of non-profits to overcome the link between technology and operations. Often organizations have the hardware and software they need, while their staff lacks the training and skill needed to successfully integrate it into their programs and operations. Organizations often also invest in technology that does not address the needs of the organization, or they make the right investment but don't follow-up with the proper technical training and support.

TW4G identifies four distinct "technology cultures", namely:

Unnecessary - failing to see the benefits of technology and avoiding it as much as possible. They do not use e-mail and depend more on paper files.
Necessary Evil - having limited use of technology. Often the organization does not use e-mail but individual staff members might. They use current equipment and outdated equipment in the same office.
Necessary Good - viewing technology as a necessary part of their work. They use current hardware/software and the organization uses e-mail. However, this organization often has an underutilized website.
Strategic Advantage - believing that their effective use of technology will give them a strategic advantage. They have invested in technology and try to integrate it into all program functions.

In order to advance an organization must systematically evolve from one culture to the next.

TW4G has developed four strategies to achieve this, namely:

Technology Works Membership - build problem-solving communities among a broad range of stakeholders;
Leadership Development - offer ongoing educational opportunities tailored for senior staff, board members and funders;
A Stable of Circuit Riders - develop the Circuit Riders program and work with existing volunt eer and intern networks to expand technology-assistance services for non-profits;
NPOHelp.Net - create a website with resources to link non-profits with each other, sources of technical assistance, hardware and software vendors, interns and volunteers, and the funding community.

An important lesson from this visit to TW4G is a reminder that in the South African context, a large section (in fact the majority) of the non-profit sector has resource and capacity needs that are so vast that they cannot even relate to the TW4G initiative. Technology is not even a part of their reality! We will have to satisfy basic needs such as infrastructure to link them with the rest of the world. A small number of non-profit organizations could benefit from the approach / solutions offered by TW4G. SANGONeT could be the local response to the challenge of using technology for improved service delivery.

TW4G's initiative is also a fine model of a partnership between the corporate and the non-profit sectors. A well-researched and delimited project gives the often-skeptical private sector confidence to engage in a partnership. The fact that part of the deliverable is quite tangible (IT software and hardware) does help to facilitate a partnership.

The TW4G model could also be applied to Government. The needs identified above would probably be similar to assessment conducted by SITA within government. It is not uncommon for (senior) officials to be disconnected from departmental networks due to the fact that they have not logged on for long periods. Yet officials are constantly attending training courses. Is the training appropriate and, indeed, is training the answer? In this instance the "technology cultures" analysis is instructive, as there are different levels of technology integration within and between different departments. Government acknowledges the fundamental role of access to information in the development process. How to change the technology culture of individuals and departments, remains a challenge.

The comprehensive technology support provided by the circuit riders is a creative response to the lack of integration of technology by NPOs. The Riders conduct a strategic analysis of objectives and technology needs and design a solution fit for the particular organization.

Washington Council of Agencies

The Washington Council of Agencies is an umbrella body to approximately 800 NPOs. Its membership ranges from CBOs, national and international NPOs. It provides technical assistance on coalition building and relationship building activities to non-profit organizations and public officials in the Washington area.

The activities of the Council, which is open to members only, include the following areas, namely networking, information dissemination and education, group buying and health insurance, advocacy and, coalition and best practice building.

The projects currently run by the Council includes an Awards Programs that recognizes an organizations' outstanding achievements in non-profit management and seeks to celebrate unsung heroes in the non-profit sector. The education project offers learning opportunities to members on areas such as Board Cooperation, effective use of interns and developing membership programs. Another project focuses on providing executive directors guidance, support and information and the opportunity to build relationships with other executive directors.

Through its publication, The WCA Non-profit Agenda, the Council connects organizations to the news, issues and services that affect the day-to-day operations of a non-profit organization. The Agenda is mailed to the more than 17 000 organizations in the Washington area.

In the area of group buying, the Council has an Associates' initiative that brings together more than 15 National Insurance Companies. The Associates undergo strict evaluation by the Council before receiving an endorsement. The benefits packages on offer are similar for both small and large organizations due to the fact that it is negotiated at the Council level and not at individual organization level.

What has been instructive about this visit for me is the relationship between benefits (monetary and otherwise) and the professionalization of the non-profit sector. By mobilizing organizations into a network and offering services such as opportunities for skills development, health insurance and information about policy issues, individuals in the sector could feel part of a significant economic force and not an economic non-entity. Often the payment of better salaries is over-emphasized as a factor to improve professionalism.

What has also been an interesting observation is the principle decision by the Council not to accept money from government, thereby not competing with member organizations for resources. It probably also protects the moral capital of the Council to strengthen their advocacy role.

Over 75% of the membership are CBOs and a challenge facing them is to fulfill the expectation of a diverse membership base and then to continue to move the interest into other areas.

The current South African initiative underway through the Non-Profit Partnership needs to be supported as it has great potential in enhancing the professionalism of the sector.

Sarah Hugow

National Community Investment Coalition (NCRC) Annual Convention

The NCRC Annual Convention, held at the Omni-Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC, from 4-7 March 2001, was our first exposure to an American civil society 'event' and was very instructive and interesting. The convention, perhaps uniquely compared to the types of meetings/events and organizations that were the focus of the remainder of the visit, had a strong advocacy component. Under the theme "Capital Access in a Global Era", the conference focussed on how to create 'globalization of opportunity' rather than further economic marginalisation, in the US and around the world.

To quote from the conference program, "The NCRC is a national not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to increase fair and equal access to credit, capital and banking services and products". The mission is based on the principle that "discrimination is illegal, unjust and detrimental to the economic growth and well-being of our society. The 800 member-strong NCRC seeks to support "long-term solutions which provide resources, knowledge and skills" that will ensure capital inflows and the end of discriminatory banking practices in America's traditionally underserved communities. Check out www.ncrc.org for more information.

NCRC is widely credited with saving the 1977 Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) which was facing virtual repeal in Congress. Initially focussed on safeguarding and monitoring the legislation, the coalition now focuses on broad socio-economic justice issues, and lately has developed a growing awareness of the effects of globalization on local economics – hence the theme of this year's annual conference.

The conference took place over four days and consisted of plenary sessions, concurrent workshops, briefings, a visit to Capitol Hill and an awards dinner. Workshops addressed the following broad themes:

Eradicating unequal and unfair access to credit and capital through education, legislation and litigation;
Building the 'know-how' and resources of organizations;
Hot legislative and regulatory issues;
Globalization of capital and credit.

The conference was useful for me on three levels:

The Issues - The actual concept around access to credit as an economic justice and human rights issue was an eye-opener, as was the concept of the Community Reinvestment Act as an affirmative legislative mechanism for ensuring access to credit for poor communities. The campaign against predatory lending and the integration of the issue of finance and 'hard' economics into community development initiatives all made a lasting impression.

Advocacy Techniques in a Democratic System - It gave me an overview of how American CSOs organize their advocacy initiatives and the techniques they use, e.g. using the conference as a capacity building mechanism and information gathering tool for activists, by providing them with the latest information and developments, through documentation and carefully selected experts in the field. Lobbying congress (the visit to Capitol Hill), the 'interactive session' on predatory lending, and the 'Predatory Lending' and 'Enforcing the CRA – an Advocates Guide" toolkits also stood out as useful techniques and tools that we could adopt.

Conference Organizing - Some useful ideas and 'how-to's' for organizing a professionally-run conference in general – e.g. the format of the program and the concurrent sessions, the evaluation forms for each session, moderation techniques, the exhibits and free literature tables, conference documentation. Even the nametags were impressive!

I particularly liked the way the program was formulated in a grid design along four main 'tracks' or themes, with sessions for each 'track' on each day of the conference. This allows delegates to either follow one 'track' or theme of interest, or pick and choose amongst the various 'tracks' for a broad overview. The workshops were also classified according to 'beginner', 'advanced' or 'beginner/advanced' to further assist delegates make the right choices. This shows the level of detail and conceptualizing that went into the planning and preparation – something we could definitely use more of.

The AGM of the NCRC was also held during the conference, and the first Board meeting was held directly afterwards – this seems like an efficient use of time and resources. The "pre-conference training" on financial literacy seemed like a good idea, too.

Idea for consideration - I would really like to see SANGOCO initiating or supporting a similar campaign or movement in this country, perhaps using existing initiatives like the SACP campaign for transformation of financial institutions as a starting point. What's useful, from my point of view, is that this campaign would focus strongly on the private sector as a responsible party in large-scale reinvestment for the first time in a meaningful, constructive way, and government would be an ally or partner (part of the campaign would obviously be lobbying government to develop the legislation). Previous civil society campaigns have been mostly anti-corporate (e.g. debt campaign) or targeted at government (social security, pro-poor budget etc.). This would be a positive, intelligent, substantive 'for' something as opposed to a blame seeking, criticizing 'against ' something campaign. It also puts corporate responsibility for socio-economic justice firmly on the agenda, something that has been missing in SA debates on development up till now. And the US precedent gives us excellent 'ammunition' to argue the merits of the case in SA. Any takers???

<u>Enterprise Foundation</u>

There are strong and logical links between the work of the Enterprise Foundation (we visited the HQ in Columbia, Maryland) and the NCRC. The NCRC's 'Excellence in Achievement Awards' are named in honour of James Rouse, co-founder (with wife Patty) of the Foundation. An NPO with a strong 'corporate' image and professional organizational culture (no jeans or open necks here please!), the Enterprise Foundation aims to 'build and strengthen America's communities'. "*Working with partners and a national network of more than 1,500* *non-profit organizations, Enterprise provides low income people with affordable housing, safer streets and access to jobs and child care".*

What impressed me about the Foundation was their multi-disciplinary, holistic approach. It helped to develop my understanding, in practical terms, about what is meant by 'integrated development' particularly in an urban context. Starting with affordable housing development and access, the Foundation's approach spans the micro and macro, and encompasses providing loans, grants and technical assistance to non-profit community development organizations, in community planning, organizational management, finance for housing, housing development management, economic development, childcare and neighborhood safety. The Internet is used in an interactive, innovative way, for example, Internet-based distance learning. They are also active in the research and public policy arena, spearheading innovative large-scale urban renewal projects and leveraging sizeable investment from socially responsible corporations. The concept of the "Comprehensive Community Initiative"(CCI), defined as "an holistic approach to neighborhood revitalization with physical, economic and social program components integrated with community building operating principles" is a practical example of Enterprise's approach in action. More interesting and useful resources can be found at www.enterprisefoundation.org.

It was a startling realization that this all started with one person – reminding me that determined, visionary individual action could really make a difference. I was particularly interested in the social investment corporation concept (very different in scale and scope to the traditional corporate social responsibility programs favoured by local companies). This is essentially a socially responsible COMPANY, functioning much like a commercial development project, e.g. it deals not only with physical development but leveraging capital and facilitating financing for consumers, but with a specific focus and mandate to provide quality, affordable housing for low and moderate income families. Using tax credits to finance for low-income housing was another example of the creative ways it is possible to leverage financing for large scale LMI development. I suppose a local equivalent would be something like the Cato Manor Development Association – but I'm not sure that they have financial products – and there are not many other local examples.

Another important insight was the way the EF assists community organizations to move from *advocacy* to *development* mode, through building organizational and institutional capacity and providing financial and employment opportunities. This is something that local NGO support organizations could learn from.

This was one of those "we'll do all the talking, thank you" meetings, but fascinating nonetheless. Plus they had the best snacks (okay, maybe TW4G was better – but that was lunch). Interesting also that NGOs offered refreshments, but government did not. Why, one wonders?? But I digress…

Idea for consideration - An Exchange Program to place staff from SA community development NGOs in organizations like the EF, or one of its many subsidiaries, to learn first hand how the organization functions and what it does. This could be complemented by staff or volunteers from EF (or similar) being placed in appropriate NGOs here, to exchange ideas and learning and assist with program development. Meaty ideas and implementation models from elsewhere, combined with expert knowledge of local conditions could considerably enhance our existing strategy development options and capabilities.

United Way

United Way defines itself as a fundraising/community building organization (our Community Chests are based on the same idea). It is essentially a fairly conservative organization (with a traditional remediation approach) trying to transform itself into a more developmental, prevention-oriented one, so there are parallels with the transformation processes currently underway in our own Department of Welfare/Social Development and traditionally government-supported welfare organizations.

The United Way has developed a community capacity building methodology in response to this challenge, as a complementary 'investment model' to the social services that it has traditionally supported. Basically, this takes the form of technical and financial support for a community strategic planning process (I got the impression this was similar to our IDP process, but at a micro or neighbourhood level). Aside from international development trends, the imperative for this shift in approach comes partly from the donor public, demanding long-term results from their charitable contributions, and federal welfare reforms and the resulting modifications in funding policies. It is similar to the Enterprise Foundation approach, but coming at it from a very different context – which in itself is an interesting social phenomenon.

For this reason I was particularly interested in how United Way has grappled with the challenge of resistance – it struck me during the meeting that this was all very nice in theory, but how did it work in practice? What were some of the difficulties or obstacles they had encountered in changing organizational habits and cultures and how had they dealt with these? Unfortunately, time ran out so my question was never answered (or it was neatly sidestepped, I'm not sure which).

We did come away with some useful publications on the UW's CB initiatives (lessons learnt, guidelines for good practice, etc.). No obvious website address. A relationship with South African community chests exists, hopefully the lessons from United Way will be shared and applied here too.

Idea for consideration - The CFC concept (automatic payroll deduction of federal employees to charity of their choice) as a fundraising tool is certainly interesting and could be the subject of further enquiry.

<u>Office of Faith-Based Initiatives and Community Development</u>

The subject of much media attention and criticism at the time of our visit, the controversial OFBI&CD (staffed exclusively, it appeared, by young, blonde women) is the Republican government's ostensibly novel attempt to find a way for federal funds to reach the most needy and disadvantaged. As an expression of the 'new republicanism', or 'compassionate conservatism', the OFBI , we were told, 'focuses on civil society as a necessary delivery agent' for the 'needs that the market and state cannot meet'. In this sense, it does not sound so very different from existing policy and practice, especially as the representative was anxious to emphasize the 'community' part of the office's name. So why the interest in faith-based organizations? Because they are 'often the only remainder of civic service or action in poor communities.' Given the sheer size and scope of CS in the States that I had witnessed on our journey, I find it hard to imagine the landscape suggested by this assertion – a desolate, poverty-stricken community without a single NGO operating anywhere, but a strong, cheerful congregation ready to leap into action if only they had the money. Knowing what I know now about American CS, that scenario seems unlikely.

One of the first tasks of the Office is to examine the regulatory environment and assess current federal programs to determine if they are 'friendly' towards CBOs and NGOs, and if not, to work towards the creation of an enabling environment. This seems to fly in the face of international trends and the movement of other government development assistance agencies AWAY from micro-management. In fact, faith-based NPOs are already an integral part of America's social delivery system, receiving substantial percentages of their funding from government sources. What seems to be different about this program is that it targets church congregations, and apparently does not require them to set up separate non-profits in order to qualify for federal assistance. It is this blurring of the separation of church and state that seems to have people worried. Could it also be a tacit recognition that the scaling back of public assistance (welfare) is going to have to be replaced by something – and churches may be the best hope to take up the slack? Some of the concerns that have been expressed are:

Introducing new players while not increasing overall funding will disrupt the system and leave less for the established service providers to meet more of the needs;
The definition of what constitutes faith-based – is it to narrow, or too broad?

When we asked Mr Eberly (at least, I think it was Mr Eberly, as he failed to introduce himself I actually cannot be sure) he was very eloquent about the philosophical underpinnings of the Office, but less clear on the practicalities of implementation. In fact he even asked us for our suggestions (but I don't think he was serious). Needless to say, no materials were provided (and there's no website address).

Our host skillfully indicated that time was up by a subtle glance at this watch and an elegant segue into his closing remarks which left us in no doubt that we were now dismissed. I suppose we were lucky to have been granted any time at all, as the Office must have been inundated with requests for interviews at the time seeing as it was so much under the media spotlight. However, I left with a distinct feeling of having been 'spin-doctored' by someone who thought the whole meeting a bit of a waste of his time, and not having got to grips with the issue of why this office exists at all.

Signet Mashego

National Community Investment Coalition (NCRC) Annual Convention

The NCRC conference highlighted a number of issues for me. Firstly, the organization looked so organized, well-staffed, boosted long-term staff employment record, operated in many states, focused and well organized. It was a conference where people learnt a lot in a short space of time.

During discussions with some of the staff members, it became clear that people enjoyed what they were doing and were confident in their work. The role of members in ensuring that the organization is successful is felt through the commitment and the local initiatives that members are working on in the respective areas of operation.

Some of the lessons learnt are the following:

Professionalism is key to organizational success through credibility and the ability to engage with relevant stakeholders including government;
A well-funded membership organization has to rely on the strength of its membership for effective lobbying and advocacy;
Local initiatives within the broader objectives are encouraged and members are able to engage locally;
That government is your people - engage with them and lobby them directly;

Invite to your conference both those who support you and those who do not support you directly, e.g. people that you want to lobby and influence (Banks);
Conduct your lobbying through interactive sessions with your key stakeholders;
That a result-driven project is more sustainable;
Socio-economic justice should be extended to the poor without limitations;
Take care of those that take care of you.

InterAction

I was also interested to know how coalition functions in the US since many organizations are viable and strong. It is difficult to have a strong membership abiding to codes of conduct and principles given that they have nothing to lose. InterAction is largely constituted by international based NGOs that are working on different areas of focus and target groups. It was interesting to note that the organizations do not necessarily work on areas that may not be shared and supported by the membership. Consensus and compromise is the order of the day given the diversified membership base.

The other aspect was the fact that the coalition office will largely act as a secretariat and will not engage in activities that are undertaken by members at different levels. Their function will be that of a supportive role for members and lobby for enabling legislative framework for the organization. Coalitions and national NGOs will normally not take money from the state since it is implementation driven, but will rather focus on other sources that allow them to do what they are comfortable in doing. Duplication of resources may exist but is not that easily visible since organizations maintain a certain focus for a longer period.

New York Borough Commissioners

The meeting was interesting because of its local based nature. In this meeting we were taken through a process that illustrated that the local government offices are central to making a difference in development and infrastructure development. Based on the American system of governance, people have easy access to the local council, mayor and the executive.

The community revitalization program in Manhattan was demonstrative of another form of partnership, which is based on need by both groups. The faith-based groups are central in development and also take pride in preserving their heritage and would like to abolish class barriers.

A participatory local government is essential to make sure that planning, budgeting and implementation are shared by both the beneficiaries and the service providers alike.

The Mayor's Office (Washington)

A team of multi disciplinary people met with us to take us through their program and projects implemented by the office. Planning and implementation was the key subject discussed. We also had the opportunity to look into various forms of partnerships.

It emerged that the mayor has a bigger role to play in insuring that the city and its neighbourhood are all taken care of. The youth and teenagers were the focus in ensuring that they are assisted to realise their potential and make a contribution to their communities and their lives (e.g. youth opportunity grant, school/bridging courses, and department of employment opportunities).

The “bridges to friendship” was a good example to illustrate that unless government acts it might have to take responsibility at a later stage for results if it is not proactive. The involvement of the Navy in building skills is another form of interdepartmental coordination for the common good.

David Barnard

Rockefeller Brothers Fund

The Rockefeller Brothers Fund was founded in 1940 as a vehicle through which the five sons and daughter of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., could share and complement their charitable and philanthropic activities. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., made a substantial gift to the Fund in 1951, and in 1960 the Fund received a major bequest from his estate. Together, these constitute the basic endowment of the Fund.

Total assets at the end of 1999 were $771,481,000. During 1999 a total of 307 grant payments were made which amounted to $20,020,941

From 1940 through 1999, the Fund disbursed a total of $506,074,101 in grants.

The Fund makes grants in eight program areas, namely Sustainable Resource Use, Global Security, Non-profit Sector, Education, New York City, South Africa, Arts and Culture, and Health.

The objective of the South African program is to improve the quality and accessibility of basic education for children and adults in the areas of early childhood development, lower primary learning, and adult basic education and training.

Support is targeted at supporting the introduction and evaluation of promising basic education models, advancing in-service development of lower primary school teachers and strengthening the institutional capacity of non-profit organizations, university programs, and government agencies in the field of basic education, including encouraging documentation, reflection upon, and dissemination of lessons learned, and facilitating cross-sectoral linkages and collaboration – among non-profit organizations, universities, and government agencies, helping non-profit organizations in the field of basic education to develop and diversify their funding and income base.

During the meeting on 9 March 2001 in New York, Stephen Heintz, President, and Nancy Muirhead shared various views and comments on the Fund’s activities with the tour group, including the Fund’s activities in South Africa.

On 11 March 2001 Stephen Heintz and Nancy Muirhead left for a visit to South Africa to meet with current and prospective grantees.

Foundation Center

The Foundation Center is an independent national service organization established by foundations in 1956. Its mission is to support and improve institutional philanthropy by promoting public understanding of the field and helping grantseekers succeed. This is done by maintaining a comprehensive and up-to-date database on foundations and corporate giving; by providing free educational programs as well as fee-based training and other services; by maintaining a content-rich website; and by tracking and analyzing trends in foundation growth and giving.

As the most authoritative source of up-to-date information on private philanthropy in the United States, the Foundation Center provides print, CD-ROM, and online resources to help grantseekers identify appropriate funders and develop targeted proposals.

The Center publishes FC Search: The Foundation Center's Database on CD-ROM, The Foundation Directory - the classic reference work for grantseekers, now available on CD-ROM, online and in print, and some 50 other directories, guides, and reports. As a vital component of its mission, it offers information and expert reference services to the public at five Foundation Center libraries and more than 200 Cooperating Collections across the country.

During the meeting on 9 March 2001 in New York we were given a brief tour of the Center, and then a comprehensive demonstration of the online information resources compiled and available from the Center or its website.

Sarah Hugow and I also visited the Center's library in Washington, D.C.

<u>Independent Sector Spring Research Forum</u>

The Independent Sector aims to promote, strengthen, and advance the non-profit and philanthropic community to foster private initiative for the public good. This is done through research, public policy and information-sharing on the non-profit sector

This bi-annual forum, held from 15-16 March 2001 in Washington, D.C., represents one of the ways through which the organization contributes to the debate on the non-profit sector. The Spring Research Forum has a 17-year tradition of stimulating new research agendas and bringing researchers from the United States and abroad together with practitioners to consider the latest research on the most current issues facing the non-profit sector.

The theme of the 2001 Forum was "The Impact of Information Technology on Civil Society – How will online innovation, philanthropy and volunteerism serve the common good?"

Through plenary / parallel sessions, as well as requests for papers / invited speakers, the conference focussed on the impact and role of technology on the work of the non-profit sector.

Questions raised and discussed included the following:

Will information technology advances expand and enhance volunteerism, philanthropy, and collaborative learning?
Will information technology change how communities develop and residents relate to each other?
How will non-profit organizations look in the future and will their activities change because of new information technology?
Will the legal and fiscal frameworks that non-profits work within change as the Web grows?
What ethical questions will arise as non-profit/for-profit partnerships grow? Will these partnerships affect accountability?
Will non-profits be visible on the Internet?

The conference was of specific relevance to both my own organization, SANGONeT, as well as to the evolving use of ICTs by South African NGOs.

As a result of this conference, SANGONeT is currently giving serious consideration to organising a similar conference in early 2002 on "ICTs and the NGO Sector in Southern Africa".

ANNEXURE 4

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